

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 080983
ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
PA/PRESS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

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O 292224Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN
JCS WASHDC 0000
DOD WASHDC
CIA WASHDC 0000
USIA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC 0000

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - MARCH 29, 1978

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR MARCH 29. FYI ONLY,
OFFICER PRESENT TODAY WAS JOHN TRATTNER.

MR. TRATTNER: THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT REGRETS
THE TRAGIC AND UNTIMELY DEATH OF THE SWEDISH SOLDIER WHO
WAS A MEMBER OF THE UNIFIL PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN
SOUTHERN LEBANON. WE HAVE EXPRESSED OUR CONDOLENCES TO
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THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT. SWEDEN HAS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE
IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING EFFORTS, WITH ITS YOUNG
MEN OFTEN EXPOSED TO DANGERS AND SACRIFICES. WE COMMEND
SWEDEN FOR THOSE COMMITMENTS IT HAS UNDERTAKEN. THIS
TRAGIC INCIDENT UNDERLINES THE URGENT NEED FOR FULL IM-
PLEMENTATION OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 425 AND
426 AND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SECURITY IN SOUTHERN
LEBANON.

Q. HOW WAS HE KILLED?

A. I DON'T HAVE THE EXACT CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS DEATH.

Q. A MINE?

A. I BELIEVE IT IS CORRECT THAT HE WAS KILLED BY A MINE
EXPLOSION.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON ANY ASPECT OF PRIME MINIS-
TER BEGIN'S SPEECH THIS MORNING TO PARLIAMENT?

A. WHAT PARTICULAR ASPECT? YOU ASK ME A SPECIFIC QUESTION.

I DON'T HAVE ANY PARTICULAR THING RELATED TO THE BEGIN
SPEECH. BUT WHAT WAS YOUR QUESTION EXACTLY?

Q. WELL, HE RAISED A NUMBER OF POINTS. I JUST WONDERED
WHETHER YOU WERE PREPARED TO ADDRESS YOURSELF TO ANY OF
THEM?

A. NO.

Q. IS DAYAN COMING TO THIS COUNTRY?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING PRECISE TO TELL YOU ABOUT THAT.
THERE IS NOTHING PRECISE I CAN GIVE YOU.

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Q. ON WHAT?

A. ON THE REPORTS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN IS GOING
TO COME TO THE UNITED STATES SHORTLY OR SOON. I THINK
THAT WAS THE REPORT, WASN'T IT?

Q. YES.

A. THERE HAS BEEN NOTHING PRECISE ON THAT. WE OBVIOUSLY
WELCOME ANY MOVES OR IDEAS THAT HELP THE PROCESS OF PEACE
OF COURSE. BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING SPECIFIC I CAN TELL
YOU ABOUT IT.

Q. CAN YOU CONFIRM THE REPORTS THAT HE IS COMING?

A. NO.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO THE SUGGESTION BY DEFENSE
MINISTERWEIZMAN THAT ATHERTON'S TRIP WAS NOT HELPFUL AND
MIGHT EVEN HAVE HARMED THE PEACE PROCESS?

A. LET ME RECALL FIRST THAT THE UNITED STATES IS PLAYING
THE ROLE OF MIDDLEMAN IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATING
EFFORT BECAUSE THE PARTIES HAVE ASKED US TO AND ROY
ATHERTON'S MISSION COMES WITHIN THAT CONTEXT.

WE DON'T SEE HIS MISSION AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR DIRECT CON-
TACTS BETWEEN THE PARTIES, BUT RATHER AS A MEANS OF
FACILITATING THOSE DIRECT CONTACTS AND, IN THE ABSENCE
OF SUCH CONTACTS, PROVIDING CONTINUITY TO THE EFFORT.

OBVIOUSLY WE BELIEVE, AS WE SAID YESTERDAY, THAT DIRECT
CONTACTS BETWEEN THE PARTIES ARE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF
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GETTING TO A LASTING PEACE SETTLEMENT. WE WELCOME THOSE CONTACTS WHEREVER AND WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND I THINK I WOULD LEAVE IT THERE.

Q. MY QUESTION WAS ABOUT THE SPECIFIC SUGGESTION THAT HIS ACTIVITIES HAVE HARMED THE PEACE PROCESS?

A. I DON'T THINK I CAN GIVE YOU A DIRECT REPLY TO WHAT THE ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER SAID. I AM SAYING THAT THE ATHERTON MISSION, AS ALL OF OUR OTHER MIDDLEMAN EFFORTS, ARE AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARTIES. I AM JUST GOING TO LEAVE IT WITH THAT RATHER THAN TRY TO RESPOND DIRECTLY. I THINK THAT IS AN ADEQUATE REJOINER.

Q. THEN BY IMPLICATION IF ONE OF THE TWO PARTIES DOESN'T WANT ATHERTON TO GO OUT HE IS NOT GOING TO GO IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE; IS THAT RIGHT?

A. I THINK IT WOULD BE LOGICAL THAT THAT WOULD FOLLOW BUT WE DON'T FORESEE ANYTHING LIKE THAT AND THERE HAS BEEN NOTHING LIKE THAT, OF COURSE, INDICATED. BUT I REPEAT, WHAT WE DO IS AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARTIES.

Q. THERE ISN'T AN ATHERTON TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

A. NO. THERE IS NOTHING THAT I KNOW OF IN THE NEAR FUTURE THAT I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT NOW.

Q. CAN I GO BACK TO THAT DAYAN REPORT. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND YOUR ANSWER. THERE IS NOTHING PRECISE ON IT? YOU MEAN HE MAY BE COMING? YOU HAVE SOME WORD THAT HE MAY BE COMING, BUT YOU HAVEN'T LINED UP THE DATES YET? IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?

A. I AM SAYING THAT THERE IS NOTHING THAT I CAN GIVE
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YOU IN A PRECISE WAY ABOUT IT. WHEN AND IF SUCH A TRIP IS SCHEDULED, WE WILL, OF COURSE, LET YOU KNOW.

Q. WILL DAYAN BE CARRYING THE ANSWERS TO THE PRESIDENT'S EXPLORATORY IDEAS THAT HE PROPOSED OR THAT HE SUBMITTED

TO PRIME MINISTER BEGIN?

A. I OBVIOUSLY CAN'T ANSWER A QUESTION LIKE THAT. I HAVEN'T SAID HE IS COMING. I HAVE SAID IF HE COMES WE WILL LET YOU KNOW. SO A QUESTION THAT IS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT HE IS COMING IS OBVIOUSLY UNANSWERABLE AT THIS POINT.

Q. A FEW MONTHS AGO IT WAS STATED THAT PRIME MINISTER BEGIN WOULD COME TO THE UNITED STATES THE END OF APRIL FOR CELEBRATIONS IN RELATION TO ISRAEL'S ANNIVERSARY. DO YOU KNOW IF THAT IS STILL THE ANTICIPATION?

A. I BELIEVE IT IS.

Q. THE LOGICAL FOLLOW-UP OF THAT IS THE QUESTION WHETHER HE IS COMING TO WASHINGTON AND WILL TALK WITH PEOPLE IN THE ADMINISTRATION?

A. I DON'T THINK ANYTHING HAS BEEN LAID ON IN THAT RESPECT. I DON'T KNOW OF ANY PLANS YET FOR HIM TO DO THAT.

2. FOLLOWING ANSWER TO QUESTIONS TAKEN AT NOON BRIEFING MARCH 28 WERE POSTED IN THE DEPARTMENT ON MARCH 28, 1978.

Q. DO WE THINK THE ISRAELIS ARE COMPLYING WITH THE UNITED UNCLASSIFIED

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NATIONS RESOLUTIONS ON LEBANON?

A. THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL HAS ASSURED US AND SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM THAT IT WILL COMPLY WITH SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 425 AND 426. AS WE HAVE SAID, ISRAELI FORCES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON HAVE ALREADY BEEN THINNED OUT.

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